

CONFLICT AND COMPROMISE

Historic Treasures in Exhibition Hall



Congress is the forum where elected representatives address issues facing the nation. These issues sometimes arise from conflicting ideas within the nation or from the pressures of world events. By providing a place for debate and compromise, Congress has led the nation through challenging times.



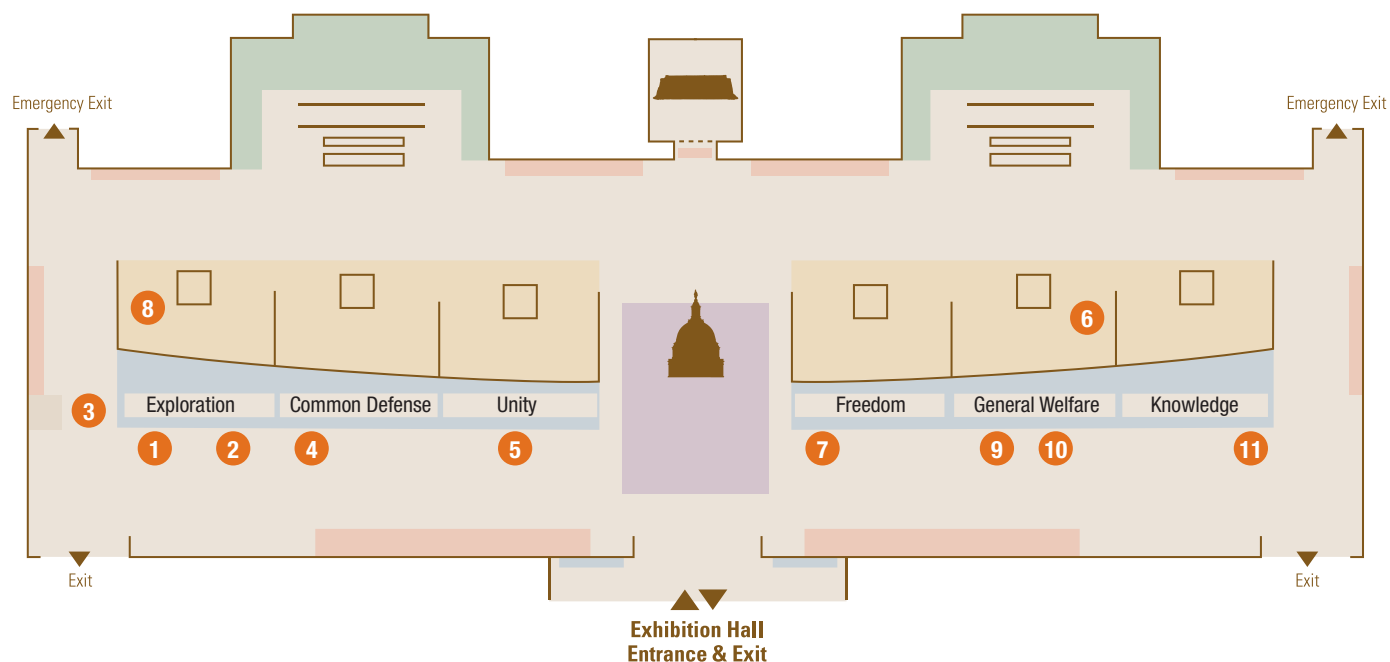
U.S. CAPITOL

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Currently on display



1 *Map of an Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains . . . and to Oregon and North California, hand-colored map by Brevet Capt. J.C. Frémont, 1845*

Before the Civil War, members of Congress passionately debated the extension of slavery into the newly-added western territories. To gain more knowledge of these territories and inform legislative decisions, Congress relied on maps like this one created by explorer John C. Frémont. Frémont later served as California's first U.S. senator.

Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress



2 *Col. Frémont Planting the American Standard on the Rocky Mountains, wood engraving by Baker & Godwin, ca. 1856*

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress



3 The Jay Treaty, Exchange Copy, November 19, 1794

In 1794 the Senate approved the nomination of Chief Justice John Jay as envoy to negotiate a new treaty between the U.S. and Britain. Jay's mission was to ease tensions caused by both sides breaching terms of the 1783 Treaty of Paris that ended America's Revolutionary War. The Senate narrowly approved the Jay Treaty in 1795, sparking protests that led to the nation's first political parties—the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans.

General Records of the U.S. Government, National Archives and Records Administration



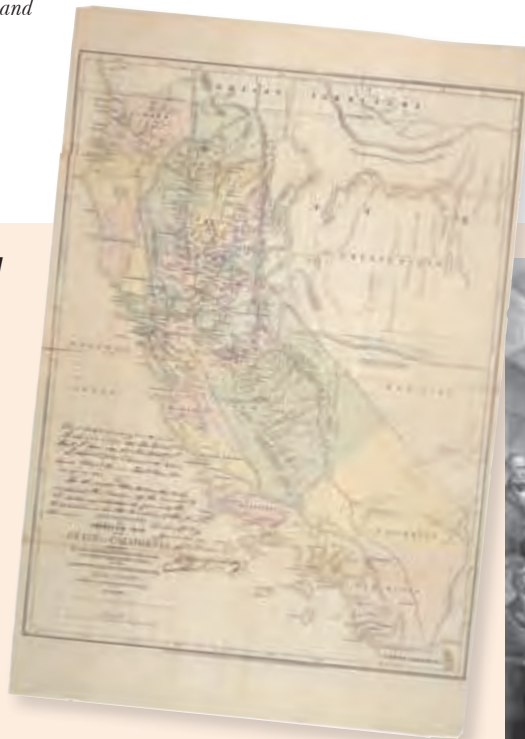
4 President George Washington's nomination of John Jay as Envoy Extraordinary to His Britannic Majesty, April 16, 1794

Records of the U.S. Senate, National Archives and Records Administration

5 Newly Constructed and Improved Map of the State of California, 1851

Sectional disputes intensified as Congress considered the issue of slavery in the western territories acquired by the Mexican War. Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky attempted to diffuse the controversy, but his initial proposal failed. Congress repackaged the proposal into a series of bills, known as the Compromise of 1850. Key provisions included California's admission as a free state, a stricter Fugitive Slave Act, and a ban on slave trading in Washington, D.C.

Records of the U.S. Senate, National Archives and Records Administration



6 The United States Senate, A.D. 1850, featuring Henry Clay, by P.F. Rothermel, engraved by R. Whitechurch, ca. 1855

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

7 Equal Rights Amendment discharge petition, June 11, 1970

Representative Martha Griffiths of Michigan filed this discharge petition to force the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which would guarantee women's full legal equality, out of the Judiciary Committee for a vote by the full House. In 1970 the ERA passed the House, but not the Senate. Congress passed a revised amendment in 1972, but the ERA was three states short of the three-fourths required for constitutional amendments by the extended deadline for ratification in 1982.

Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, National Archives and Records Administration



8 Representative Martha Griffiths of Michigan, 1970

U.S. News and World Report Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

9 Power to Win: Ten Years of TVA, poster, 1945

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), a federal public power provider, was born of persistent effort by Senator George Norris of Nebraska. After prolonged debate, Congress established the TVA as a federal entity in 1933. TVA-generated power proved crucial in home-front defense production in World War II.

Records of the War Production Board, National Archives and Records Administration



10 Electric phosphate-smelting furnace in a TVA chemical plant, Muscle Shoals, Alabama, photograph by Alfred T. Palmer, 1942

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

11 Joint Resolution of the Legislature of the State of Minnesota accepting the donation of lands by Congress . . . [Morrill Act], approved January 27, 1863

To bolster the economic future of the nation, Representative Justin S. Morrill of Vermont championed federal aid for states to create agricultural and technical colleges. Minnesota, for example, used funds from the sale of federal land to build the University of Minnesota. Vetoed in 1859, the Morrill Land-Grant Act was reintroduced and passed in 1862.

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress



Representative Justin S. Morrill of Vermont, 1859

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

Looking at Documents

Equal Rights for Women

After the Nineteenth Amendment secured women's voting rights in 1920, suffragist Alice Paul drafted the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to guarantee women's full legal equality. Introduced in every Congress from 1923 to 1972, the ERA was repeatedly stymied in committee. Its opponents feared loss of special protections for women and resisted increasing federal authority. In 1970 Representative Martha Griffiths of Michigan got the ERA discharged from committee. Slightly revised, the amendment passed both houses in 1972 but failed ratification by the requisite number of states and was never adopted.

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

"Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Look at the amount of time this version of the bill was in committee before it was discharged and put to a vote in the chambers. Imagine the issues congressional leaders discussed in committee. What does equal rights for men and women really mean and how might it impact society, economics, and cultural mores? Do we need an amendment in the Constitution protecting the equality of rights between men and women?

91st Congress House of Representatives No. 5

Motion to Discharge a Committee from the Consideration of a Joint Resolution
(State whether bill, joint resolution, or resolution)

To the Clerk of the House of Representatives: June 11, 1970
(Date)

Pursuant to Clause 4 of Rule XXVII (see rule on page 7), I,
Martha W. Griffiths
(Name of Member), move to discharge the
Committee on the Judiciary
(Committee)

from the consideration of the Joint Resolution
(Bill, joint resolution, or resolution)
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, H.J. Res. 264
(Number, if a bill) (Number, if a joint resolution) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
entitled, a Joint Resolution
(Title, joint resolutions, or resolutions) Proposing an amendment to the
Constitution of the United States relative to equal rights for
(Title)
men and women.

which was referred to said committee January 16, 1969
(Date of reference)

in support of which motion the undersigned Members of the House of Representatives affix their signatures, to wit:

1. Martha W. Griffiths	12. William L. Clay
2. Robert C. Byrd	13. James P. Stennis
3. Royce A. Wilkins	14. James D. Eastland
4. Henry B. Smith	15. Richard L. Stennis
5. Charles W. Stenholm	16. Henry Helms
6. Albert W. Green	17. Shirley Chisholm
7. James P. Cannon	18. William F. Harshaw
8. William J. Edwards	19. John E. Moore
9. Richard T. Hanna	20. Howard Callaway
10. Representative Heckle	21. John Howard
11. Charles P. Stenholm	22. Albert K. Harris

Equal Rights Amendment discharge petition, June 11, 1970

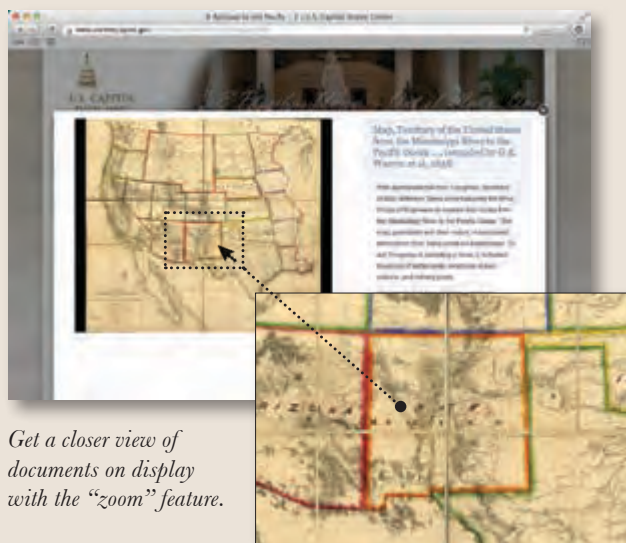
Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, National Archives and Records Administration



Exhibition Hall Online



Explore the Capitol Visitor Center's online exhibition. Find out more about the fascinating artifacts and documents in Exhibition Hall that tell the story of the history of Congress and the building of the Capitol at www.visitthecapitol.gov/exhibit.



Get a closer view of documents on display with the “zoom” feature.



A More Perfect Union

“Conflict and Compromise” is the theme of the documents currently on display in the exhibit **A More Perfect Union**.

This section of Exhibition Hall illustrates the role of Congress in defining and helping to realize national goals and aspirations. Treasured documents from the National Archives and the Library of Congress trace the journey toward “a more perfect union” through the actions of Congress.



Documents illustrating “Conflict and Compromise” are arranged in six thematic sections—**Exploration, Common Defense, Unity, Freedom, General Welfare** and **Knowledge**.



The United States Capitol is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Saturday. It is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year’s Day, and Inauguration Day.

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